Debunking The State Dept.'s Slanted Version of The Vietnamese War, Pps. 1-4

If We're Not Careful, One of These Days We're Liable to Hit A Guerrilla

"The employment of jet aircraft has been a subject of controversy at the Pentagon. . . . It has been argued that fighting guerrillas with jet bombers in jungle areas will inevitably prove unproductive since in most instances the guerrilla forces can disappear easily."

—New York Times *Feb. 25 on the decision to use jets.*

"One risk in using supersonic bombers against ground targets is that inevitably some bombs will fall on innocent civilians, probably in more instances than when slower aircraft are used."

—Wall Street Journal *same day.*

"B-57 air strikes against the Viet Cong have been halted in a Mekong delta area after the American bombers accidentally killed 4 South Vietnamese troops and wounded 13. . . . There were no reports of damage to the Viet Cong. . . . The B-57s and Vietnamese Air Force Skyraiders had been pounding the area for five days."

—*AP from Saigon in* Washington Evening Star *March 1.*

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A Reply to the White Paper

That North Vietnam supports the guerrillas in South Vietnam is no more a secret than that the United States supports the South Vietnamese government against them. The striking thing about the State Department's new White Paper is how little support it can prove. "Incontrovertible evidence of Hanoi's elaborate program to supply its forces in the South with weapons, ammunition and other supplies," the White Paper says, "has accumulated over the years." A detailed presentation of this evidence is in Appendix D; unfortunately few will see the appendices since even the *New York Times* did not reprint them, though these are more revealing than the report. Appendix D provides a list of weapons, ammunition and other supplies of Chinese Communist, Soviet, Czech and North Vietnamese manufacture, with the dates and place of capture from the Viet Cong guerrillas, over the 18-month period from June, 1962, to January 29 last year when it was presented to the International Control Commission. The Commission was set up by the Geneva agreement of 1954. This list provides a good point at which to begin an analysis of the White Paper.

The Pentagon's Figures

To put the figures in perspective, we called the Pentagon press office and obtained some figures the White Paper does not supply—the number of weapons captured from the guerrillas and the number lost to them in recent years:

	Captured From Guerrillas	Lost to Them
1962	4,800	5,200
1963	5,400	8,500
1964	4,900	13,700
3-Year Total	15,100	27,400

In three years, the guerrillas captured from our side 12,300 more weapons than they lost to us.

What interests us at the moment is not this favorable balance but the number of guerrilla weapons our side captured during the past three years. The grand total was 15,100. If Hanoi has indeed engaged in an "elaborate program" to supply the Viet Cong, one would expect a substantial number of enemy-produced weapons to turn up. Here is the sum total of enemy-produced weapons and supplies in that 18-month tally to the Control Commission—

72 rifles (46 Soviet, 26 Czech)
64 submachine guns (40 Czech, 24 French but "modified" in North Vietnam)
15 carbines (Soviet)
8 machine guns (6 Chinese, 2 North Vietnamese)
5 pistols (4 Soviet, 1 Czech)
4 mortars (Chinese)
3 recoilless 75.mm rifles (Chinese)
3 recoilless 57.mm guns (Chinese)
2 bazookas (1 Chinese, 1 Czech)
2 rocket launchers (Chinese)
1 grenade launcher (Czech)

179 total

This is not a very impressive total. According to the Pentagon figures, we captured on the average 7500 weapons each 18-months in the past three years. If only 179 Communist-made weapons turned up in 18 months, that is less than 2½% of the total. Judging by these White Paper figures,

(Continued on Page Two)

Little Support For Wider War

The polls show little support for a wider war but scant attention is being paid to this. Congressional debate continues to distort the latest Harris poll on the Vietnamese war (Washington Post, Feb. 22). The only figure being quoted is the 83% approval for the Pleiku retaliatory raids. A table showing decreasing support for a wider war is ignored. Those polled were asked to choose between three policies. One was to carry the war into North Vietnam at the risk of bringing China in. This got 20% last November, 17% in January and 12% in February. A second choice was to negotiate and get out. This got 20% in November, 23% in January and 35% in February. A third course, to hold the line in South Vietnam against a Communist takeover, had 40% in November and January, 46% in February. Similar results turned up in the last Gallup poll (New York Herald-Tribune, March 1) where 67% answered "yes" when asked whether they approved of "action taken by the U.S. in Vietnam in the last few days." When those who voted "yes" were asked whether they favored continuance even at the risk of nuclear war, only 31% said they did.

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our military are wrong in estimating, as they have in recent months, that 80% of the weapons used by the guerrillas are captured from us. It looks as if the proportion is considerably higher. The material of North Vietnamese origin included only those 24 French sub-machine guns "modified" in North Vietnam, 2 machine guns made in North Vietnam, 16 helmets, a uniform and an undisclosed number of mess kits, belts, sweaters and socks. Judging by this tally, the main retaliatory blow should be at North Vietnam's clothing factories.

Not Enough for A Battalion

There is another way to judge this tally of captured Communist weapons. A Communist battalion has about 450 men. It needs 500 rifles, four 80-mm. mortars, eight 60-mm. mortars and at least four recoilless rifles. The weapons of Communist origin captured in 18 months would not adequately outfit one battalion. The figures in the appendix on ammunition captured provides another index. We captured 183 (Chinese) shells for a 60 mm. mortar. This fires about 20 shells a minute, so that was hardly enough ammunition for 10 minutes of firing. There were 100,000 (Chinese) cartridges for 7.26 mm. machine guns. That looks impressive until one discovers on checking with knowledgeable military sources that these machine guns fire 600 rounds a minute. A machine gun platoon normally has four machine guns. This was enough ammunition for about 40 minutes of firing by one platoon. Indeed, if the ratio of Communist-made weapons captured is the same for weapons used, then only 12½ days of those 18 months were fought by the guerrillas on the basis of Communist made supplies.

If these figures were being presented in a court of law, they would run up against a further difficulty: one would have to prove the arms actually came from the Communist side. There is a world-wide market in second-hand weapons. One can buy Soviet, Czech and Chinese Communist weapons of all kinds only two miles or so from the Pentagon at Interarmco, Ltd., 7 Prince Street, Alexandria, Va. Interarmco, one of the world's foremost dealers, can provide more Communist weapons than we picked up in 18 months on Vietnamese battlefields. Interarmco's East European Communist weapons come in large part from the huge stocks of Soviet and Czech arms captured by the Israelis in the Suez campaign. It has Chinese Communist weapons captured by our side in the Korean war. It also has, of course, a wide selection of our own military surplus. This has turned up in strange places.

For example, a book on the Algerian war, *Les Algeriens en guerre,* by Dominique Darbois and Phillippe Vingneau, was published in Milan in 1960 by Feltrinelli. It shows pictures of FLN (National Liberation Front) Algerian rebels wearing U.S. Marine Corps uniforms from which the "USM" and the eagle and globe insignia have not even been removed. It shows Algerians carrying U.S. 80-mm. mortars and U.S. 50-calibre machine guns. Such photos could have been used by France to accuse the U.S. of supplying the Algerian rebels.

The State Department's White Paper says "dramatic new proof was exposed just as this report was being completed" in the discovery of a suspected Viet Cong arms cargo ship on Feb. 16. The *New York Times* commented astringently on this in an editorial Feb. 28—

Apparently, the major new evidence of a need for escalating the war, with all the hazard that this entails, was provided by the sinking in a South Vietnamese cove earlier this month of a 100-ton cargo ship loaded with Communist-made small arms and ammunition. A ship of that size is not much above the Oriental junk class. The standard Liberty or Victory ship of World War II had a capacity of 7,150 to 7,650 tons.

The affair of the cargo ship is curious. Until now there has been little evidence of arms coming in by ship. A huge fleet of small vessels patrols the coast and there have been glowing stories in the past of its efficiency. "About 12,000 vessels," the AP reported from Saigon (*New York Times,* Feb. 22) "are searched each month by the South Vietnamese coastal junk patrol force but arrests are rare and no significant

The Lesson Burma Can Teach

"Immediately after Burma's independence in Jan. 1948, the Burmese Communists went underground and started a widespread insurrection. The Burmese government dealt with this internal problem by its own means, without asking for any outside military assistance. . . . The Burmese Communist Party is still underground after 17 years and still illegal. But let me tell you there has not been a single instance of outside help to the Burmese Communists. . . . Burma has over 1,000 miles of land frontier with mainland China. If only the Burmese government had decided at some stage to seek outside military assistance . . . then I am sure that Burma would have experienced one of the two alternatives: either the country would be divided into two parts or the whole country would have become communist long ago. . . . Not one American life has been lost in Burma. Not one American dollar has been spent in Burma in the form of military assistance in the last 17 years. We should ask the great question: Why?"

—UN Sec. Gen. U Thant, press conf. Feb. 24.

The Stuff That Guerrillas Are Made Of: Excerpts From A Dead Viet Cong's Diary

"Leaving temporarily the beloved North to return to my native South to liberate my compatriots from the yoke of misery imposed by My-Diem (U. S. Diem). This has been my ideal for a long time. . . . For the third time my life turned to war again. For the liberation of our compatriots in the South, a situation of boiling oil and burning fire is necessary! A situation in which husband is separated from wife, father from son, brother from brother is necessary. I joined the ranks of the liberation army in answer to the call of the front for liberation of the South.

"Now my life is full of hardship—not enough rice to eat nor enough salt to give a taste to my tongue, not enough clothing to keep myself warm! But in my heart I keep loyal to the Party and the people. I am proud and happy. I am writing down this story for my sons and my grandsons of the future to know of my life and activities during the revolution when the best medicine available was the root of the wild banana tree and the best bandage was the leaf of rau lui, when there was no salt to give a taste to our meals, when there was no such food as meat or fish like we enjoy in a time of peace and happiness such as I have known and left behind."

—From the diary found in the uniform of Do Luc, a dead Viet Cong soldier Sept. 3, 1961, and reprinted in Appendix M of Part II, the State Department's 1961 Blue Book on the War in Vietnam.

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amounts of incriminating goods or weapons ever have been found." This lone case of a whole shipload of arms is puzzling.

Few Northern Infiltrees Cited

The White Paper's story on the influx of men from the North also deserves a closer analysis than the newspapers have given it. Appendix C provides an elaborate table from 1959-60 to 1964 inclusive, showing the number of "confirmed" military infiltrees per year from the North. The total is given as 19,550. One way to measure this number is against that of the military we have assigned to South Vietnam in the same years. These now total 23,500, or 25% more, and 1,000 are to be added in the near future. The number of North Vietnamese infiltrees is "based on information . . . from at least two independent sources." *Nowhere are we told how many men who infiltrated from the North have actually been captured.* There is reason to wonder whether the count of infiltrees may be as bloated as the count of Viet Cong dead; in both cases the numbers used are estimates rather than actual bodies.

The White Paper calls the war an invasion and claims "that as many as 75% of the more than 4400 Viet Cong who are known to have entered the South in the first eight months of 1964 were natives of North Vietnam." But a careful reading of the text and the appendices turns up the names of only six North Vietnamese infiltrees. In Part I of the White Paper, Section B gives "individual case histories of North Vietnamese soldiers" sent South by Hanoi but all nine of these are of South Vietnamese origin. The next Section, C, is headed "Infiltration of Native North Vietnamese." It names five infiltrees but one of these is also from the South. That leaves four North Vietnamese natives. Then, in Appendix C, we are given the case histories and photographs of nine other Viet Cong sent South by Hanoi. The report does not explain which ones were originally from the South but it does give the names of the provinces in which they were born. When these are checked, it turns out that only two of the nine were born in North Vietnam. This gives us a total of six Northern infiltrees. It is strange that after five years of fighting, the White Paper can cite so few.

None of this is discussed frankly in the White Paper. To do so would be to bring the war into focus as a rebellion in the South, which may owe some men and materiel to the North but is largely dependent on popular indigenous support for its manpower, as it is on captured U.S. weapons for its supply. The White Paper withholds all evidence which points to a civil war. It also fails to tell the full story of the July 1962 Special Report by the International Control Commission. Appendix A quotes that portion in which the Commission 2-to-1 (Poland dissenting) declared that the North had in specific instances sent men and material south in violation of the Geneva accords. But nowhere does the State Department mention that the same report also condemned South Vietnam and the U.S., declaring that they had entered into a military alliance in violation of the Geneva agreements. The U.S. was criticized because it then had about 5,000 military advisers in South Vietnam. The Geneva accords limited the U.S. military mission to the 684 in Vietnam at the time of the 1954 cease-fire. The U.S. and South Vietnam were also criticized by the ICC for hamstringing the Commission's efforts to check on imports of arms in violation of the Geneva Accords.

The reader would never guess from the White Paper that the Geneva accords promised that elections would be held in 1956 to reunify the country. The 1961 Blue Book at least mentioned the elections, though somehow managing to make them seem a plot. "It was the Communists' calculation," the

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Still Evading The Idea of Free Elections

"Q. Mr. Secretary, were we satisfied that all supplies and infiltration from the North had been stopped, would the United States be content to solve the indigenous aspects, the civil war aspects, by free elections under international supervision in South Vietnam?

A. Well, let's get to the first step first, and then if we get to that step, then we will have the luxury of indulging in the consideration of the second step.

Q. What are our policies with regard to the indigenous aspects of a civil war? Could you enlighten us on this?

A. Well, I think that the indigenous aspects of it could be brought to a conclusion very quickly, and that the South Vietnamese people could turn back to the problem of building their country and improving their constitutional system, elevating the economic standards of the country and get on with the modernization of the country which has been their purpose from the beginning.

Q. But only by force, Mr. Secretary?

A. I am not commenting on that. I think the pacification of the country would be easy if the external aggression were stopped."

—Secretary Rusk, at his press conference, Feb. 25.

The Freedom We Defend in South Vietnam Does Not Include Fredom To Ask For Peace

"Slightly unnerving to the Americans was today's petition for peace. The police dispersed a gathering of 50 people who wished to hold a press conference to launch the appeal. Their resolution calls on both the Government and the National Liberation Front to agree to an immediate cease-fire. Dated Feb. 16 and distributed in Vietnamese, French and English, it considers that the war, increasing in intensity, threatens to exterminate the Vietnamese race and to ignite a world war on its national territory. It further states that the whole population demands a cease-fire. The resolution is signed by an author and two doctors. Vietnamese journalists claim that more than 400 'leading personalities and intellectuals' have also signed. None of the original three was available at home today and one is said to have been arrested."

—The Times *(London) from Saigon Feb. 26.*

"This is the first such [peace] effort to have dared come into the open. . . . I met today someone who had signed the resolution. The police action, though drawing a request for anonymity, had not silenced him, and the charges of communism were scornfully dismissed. . . . My informant was convinced that everyone was fed up with the war. . . . All that the people wanted was their independence: let Vietnamese talk to Vietnamese without interference. It was not a matter of 'isms.' . . . For the man in the street—and my informant was not one—the only thing that mattered was peace."

—The Times *(London) from Saigon Feb. 27.*

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Blue Book put it, "that nationwide elections scheduled in the accords for 1956 would turn all of South Vietnam over to them. . . . The authorities in South Vietnam refused to fall into this well-laid trap." The White Paper omits mention of the elections altogether and says, "South Vietnam's refusal to fall in with Hanoi's scheme for peaceful takeover came as a heavy blow to the Communists." This is not the most candid and objective presentation. From the Viet Minh point of view, the failure to hold the elections promised them when they laid down their arms was the second broken promise of the West. The earlier one was in 1946 when they made an agreement to accept limited autonomy within the French union, and welcomed the returning French troops as comrades of the liberation. Most of the French military did not want to recognize even this limited form of independence, and chose instead the road which led after eight years of war to Dienbienphu.*

That "Economic Miracle" Again

The most disingenuous part of the White Paper is that in which it discusses the origins of the present war. It pictures the war as an attack from the North, launched in desperation because the "economic miracle" in the South under Diem had destroyed Communist hopes of a peaceful takeover from within. Even the strategic hamlets are described as "designed to improve the peasant's livelihood" and we are asked to believe that for the first time in history a guerrilla war spread not because the people were discontented but because their lot was improving!

The true story is a story of lost opportunities. The Communist countries acquiesced in the failure to hold elections. Diem had a chance to make his part of the country a democratic show-case. The year 1956 was a bad one in the North. There was a peasant uprising and widespread resentment among the intellectuals over the Communist Party's heavy-handed thought control. But Diem on the other side of the 17th Parallel was busy erecting a dictatorship of his own. In 1956 he abolished elections even for village councils. In 1957 his mobs smashed the press of the one legal opposition party, the Democratic Bloc, when it dared criticize the government. That was the beginning of a campaign to wipe out every form of opposition. It was this campaign and the oppressive exactions imposed on the peasantry, the fake land reform and the concentration camps Diem set up for political opponents of all kinds, which stirred ever wider rebellion from 1958 onward in the grass roots *before* North Vietnam gave support.** It was this which drove oppositionists of all kinds into alliance with the Communists in the National Liberation Front.

Long before the North was accused of interference, its government was complaining to the Control Commission of "border and air-space violations by the south and infringements of the Geneva agreement by the introduction of arms and U.S. servicemen." *** For four years after Geneva, both North Vietnam and China followed the "peaceful co-existence" policy while the U.S. turned South Vietnam into a military base and a military dictatorship. It is in this story the White Paper does not tell, and the popular discontent it does not mention, that the rebellion and the aid from the North had their origins.

The Cost of Playing Planetary Gendarme

"'But what are we going to do,' asked Senator Jordan (R. Idaho), 'if we don't get the full cooperation [of business in curtailing foreign investments] needed to bring our accounts into balance?'

"'We'd have to look to the whole program—to our military commitments, our foreign aid, our credit policies,' [Wm. McChesney] Martin [Jr., chairman of the Federal Reserve Board] replied.

"Later Senator Talmadge (D. Ga.) asked, 'Don't you think we'll have to cut down some of our commitments abroad?' The Federal Reserve chairman replied, 'I agree.' Talmadge said we have troops in some 30 countries of the world and asked, 'Don't you think we should lighten this burden?'

"'It's not for me to say how it should be done,' Martin replied."

Baltimore Sun *Feb. 27: Joint Economic Committee hearings on the U.S. imbalance of payments.*

*** See Jean Sainteny's Histoire d' une paix manquee (Paris 1953) and Ellen Hammer's The Struggle for Indochina (Stanford 1954).**

**** Philippe Devillers in the China Quarterly, Jan.-Mar. 1962.**

***** Survey of International Affairs 1956-58, by Geoffrey Barraclough, a publication of Britain's Royal Institute of International Affairs. P. 420.**

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